



**SUPPORTING
DEVELOPMENT
IN CHRIST'S NAME
1961-2011**

Autumn 2011

Outreach Abroad



In this issue:

- Pursuing dreams in a Dhaka slum
- Making a difference in Uganda
- Health Care Needs in Nepal
- Leadership Training
- Credit in Sri Lanka
plus
- Presents with a Purpose – new brochure inside

Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six...

By Russell Ashley-Smith, Chairman of OA

Operation Agri has for a number of years been ignoring Mr Micawber's warning not to allow our outgoings to exceed our income. We had a large balance in our deposit account and knew that our donors would want the money put to good use helping some of the world's poorest.

Last year, however, with income static and a lower balance, the Trustees recognised that we needed to move towards a balanced budget, taking care not to disadvantage any of our overseas partners.

Most of their development programmes last for two to four years. When initially agreeing to give support, OA indicates that subject to satisfactory reports, we expect to help finance a programme to its conclusion. And even then the local team will often move onto another project. Continuity of funding is therefore desirable and we try to avoid sudden adjustments, lest our partners have to lose experienced staff.

This year our UK supporters, both individuals and churches, are obviously feeling the financial squeeze. While the number of gifts is roughly the same as last year, the total donated has declined and the Trustees are struggling to know what to budget for overseas support next year. Please pray that our Lord will provided guidance in this situation.

We already run a tight ship. Filming overseas for the annual appeal is always undertaken by a locally-based crew, for example. We are reluctant to reduce the frequency of this magazine but we have taken steps to check we're not sending more copies than are being put to good use. Our print-runs for leaflets etc. are regularly adjusted to minimise any surplus, and the printing bills are very competitive. Dates of committee meetings are fixed well in advance

so those travelling by train can book tickets at advantageous prices. What more might we do? Please let us know.

Another area where we would appreciate your prayers relates to publicity. We need the help of a committed friend with writing skills – to prepare news releases and feature articles. The details are readily available in past issues of the magazine, on the website, and in the reports and correspondence from overseas projects – it just needs knocking into shape. If you know someone who might fill this role, please suggest it to them. But beware! It may change their whole life – this is what I was doing when I started in Operation Agri quite a few decades ago!



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This edition of Outreach Abroad was compiled and edited by Stan Crees and Malcolm Drummond. To be added to the mailing list, contact Malcolm Drummond (administrator) – see back cover.



Front Cover Photograph:

Paul Kyalimpa provides training for a group of SDKF linked farmers. See pp. 4-5.

Pursuing dreams in a Dhaka slum

By OA trustee, Mary Hart. For 15 years Mary worked with BMS in Bangladesh, involved in health related programmes. She returned to the UK in 1988 and has recently retired from her role as an NHS Public Health Specialist.

Slum and squatter settlements are common in many large cities in the developing world as people migrate from rural areas in search of employment. The Bangladesh capital, Dhaka, has around 5,000 such communities. The newcomers settle in densely populated areas, living in one-room homes made from bamboo and tin and with inadequate access to water and little or no sanitation. They are risky places to grow up and children, particularly girls, are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The Duaripara Family Development Project, run by Oasis alongside the Church of Bangladesh, is working in the heart of a large Dhaka slum, focussing on girls and their families in an integrated programme with four strands: education, family well-being, health, and income development.



Pre-school classes help the children to catch up in their education

The project's vision "to see girls developing their potential, pursuing their dreams and having hope of a different future" reflects that of Jesus who said, "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." The

project's aim is to bring long-term transformation to the lives of girls at risk of sexual and commercial exploitation.

Education

This year 105 girls were registered in the education programme. Among them is Putul, who joined the "catch-up" programme in 2009. Putul lives with her widowed mother and five brothers and sisters and had dropped out of formal education before coming to the project. Putul has done well and took the government Primary School Certificate exam in 2010, coming out with top grades. She will now be able to enrol in the state school in class 6. Putul is enthusiastic about her education and wants to be a doctor.



Putul is now able to enter mainstream classes

Family Wellbeing

In 2010 project staff visited 80 families more than 10 times and discussed different issues relating to the negative impact of domestic violence. This is a very sensitive issue

but an important cause for concern. As a result of this work there has been a significant decrease in violence in the home.

Health

In 2010 the project started a three month trial nutrition programme for malnourished students. This included 8 year old Munni who, with her sister Sharmina, was studying in the Education programme. Their family is very poor, and though the parents were trying their best there was just not enough money to buy nutritious food for the children. Munni was suffering from severe malnutrition, but has now improved and made satisfactory weight-gain through the help of the project. Following advice and support from the project Munni's parents are now using water purification tablets for drinking water and have enrolled at the local health care centre where they can receive free medical treatment for the common diseases that aggravate malnutrition such as worm infestation and diarrhoea.



The feeding programme has overcome Munni's malnutrition

Income Development

Parents of girls enrolled in the education project have formed two savings groups and are saving regularly. Many parents and older siblings have also attended skills training courses which include sewing classes, candle making classes and driving lessons. These skills are now being used to earn extra money for the families involved.

Lives are changed

Working in a slum is always challenging. At any time the government may order the houses to be demolished leaving these vulnerable families homeless. This year there has been a sharp rise in the cost of food which has put further pressure on families to send their children out to earn money rather than let them attend school. Despite these pressures the project has been able to bring positive changes in the lives of many girls and their families in Duaripara slum, showing the love of Jesus in action.

Help with basic food makes the difference between health and malnutrition

Photos: Oasis, Bangladesh

Operation Agri has provided £8,500 towards the support of this project this year

Making a difference in Christ's

Dennis set up the charity SDKF with a group of Christian friends when he was a student in Kampala, Uganda. Operation Agri first got involved with their project training disadvantaged young people in sewing skills. SDKF were also developing a demonstration farm in Nakaseke district, where they support orphaned children, so OA asked our partner Pastor Paul Kyalimpa to advise them. The result is another sustainable farming project, in central Uganda, similar to the project at Gulu in the north.

For many people in Uganda, Nakaseke is mostly known for the guerrilla war in the 1980s. From 1982-86, National Resistance Army guerrillas used Nakaseke district, 70km north of the capital Kampala, as a base for their armed campaign against the governments of Tito Okello and Milton Obote. Many people died and the war paralyzed the area, leaving it a virtual wasteland, with thousands of human skulls littered all over. As a result, the area is underdeveloped with high illiteracy, and most

In June 2010, Operation Agri gave us a grant so SDKF could establish a project in Kikamulo, Nakaseke district: **Improving Rural Livelihood through sustainable Agriculture.** Our aim is to empower vulnerable peasant farmers to improve food supplies, by using sustainable agricultural technologies, balancing profitability, quality of life, and land stewardship. We also seek to build leadership and working partnerships that integrate farms, food systems, and institutions for a sustainable future.

The farmers are encouraged to work in groups, with on-farm trials, workshops, field trips, farm planning, and feasibility studies, to explore change. Master farmers (Community Field Trainers, CFTs) mentor other farmers,



Dennis Ssettaala training a new group of farmers

people living below the poverty line. While the land is good for agriculture, frequent droughts due to global warming, backward technology, and lack of knowledge of good farming methods, have led to food insecurity for the vulnerable poor.

The farmers learn a variety of approaches to sustainable agriculture



Practising organic farming techniques

to transfer management skills and wisdom to the next generation of farmers. These groups also received seedlings and small animals from SDKF.

We found out that one of the biggest problems of peasant farmers is the hard manual labour, using rudimentary tools like hoes. At the break of dawn, men and women go to the fields and spend all day digging there. The hard labour limits the size of the field and the crop. So SDKF saw it as an opportunity to introduce oxen and ploughs. We currently have 4 groups, each of over 30 farmers, and each group has two pairs of oxen and a plough. These were loaned to farmers by SDKF and they are expected to pay back in 18 months, into a revolving loan fund so the money can buy oxen and ploughs for other groups. Oxen are also rented out by farmers groups

to people in the villages at a small fee, so they can plough their own fields faster.

We introduced oxen for a few reasons: we could affect a greater number of villages; and the farmers have to take some responsibility for their progress by paying the small fee. Using oxen is much easier work, and will allow them to farm larger areas of land and increase food production.

Our work in Nakaseke began with a child support project, generating income to pay for basic needs and education of orphans and disadvantaged children. OA helped us establish a poultry project and demonstration farm. We thank God that though our farm has been affected by droughts, the project has continued supporting these children, and we now provide some of our children's basic needs, pay part time trainers, and facilitate the children's after school programmes.

SDKF Vocational Skills Training Project, Kampala

In a slum area of Kampala, SDKF has continued to provide skills to disadvantaged young people. Since 2007 137 vulnerable young people have received training in tailoring skills, to enable them to sustain themselves and their dependants.

The Project recruits 45 beneficiaries per year and the training follows a full-time curriculum comprising: tailoring and designing, entrepreneur skills, life skills, job skills and development of a business idea.

Sewing Machine Loan Fund

We realized that some of our former students cannot use their skills to earn a living, due to inability to possess a sewing machine. To solve this problem, Operation Agri gave us a grant to start a revolving Loan Fund for graduate students to pay for a sewing machine. So far 15 students have been able get their own machines under this scheme. Repayments are spread over 8 months and when the first batch complete their loan payments, we shall be able to provide another 15 sewing machines to the next batch.

The sewing loan fund has brought tremendous differences in the lives of disadvantaged children/youth who had no hope of starting their own sewing business.

A student proudly displays her new sewing machine



Learning tailoring skills will set these students up in their own small business

Betty's Story

Betty is 17 years old, and stopped school in 2004 at the age of 10, when the LRA rebel army attacked her village in Oyam District, northern Uganda. They abducted 20 girls, including her, killing her parents. Betty and many other young girls were forcibly marched into southern Sudan.

Betty says:

We walked for four days and four nights. In southern Sudan, the LRA had bases that were run and protected by forces allied with the Sudanese government in Khartoum. I and the other girls captured with me were trained to assemble and disassemble, clean and use guns. We were used as slave labour by the LRA soldiers. We were forcibly given to senior LRA commanders as so-called 'wives.'

For two years I was held in captivity by the LRA, always looking for an opportunity to escape. I constantly prayed that God would allow me to see my family once more before I died. I saw two other children who had tried, unsuccessfully, to escape. They were brutally murdered in front of me as a warning.

One night, we were forced to raid a village, and I was directed to help steal food and water. We got very tough resistance from the government soldiers, and I managed to escape. I walked for three days, living on leaves before I eventually found a group of villagers who took care of me, before helping connect with the Ugandan army to return me home.

I escaped alive from the LRA but three of my friends died in captivity. The others gradually managed to escape over the next few years: some are infected with HIV/AIDS; many of them have children by the commanders who abused them.

I later joined my uncle who lives in Kampala, but because he had no reliable income I stayed at home for three years. Then my uncle heard that SDKF was offering free tailoring and design training. He picked up the application form for me and applied. I thank God for SDKF Vocational Skills Training Project for allowing me to gain skills in Tailoring and Design.

Betty has now completed her course at SDKF Vocational Skills training project and received a sewing machine on a loan so that she can start her own business.

Health Care Needs in Nepal

By Christine Smith
(née Preston)

Christine served with BMS for 41 years in health related programmes in Bangladesh and Nepal until retirement in 2010

It is just 100 miles from the snowy peaks of Mount Everest to the Ganges plain. The mighty Himalayas, the middle hills of the Mahabharata and then sea level mean that Nepal is a nation of diversity and contrast – geographical, agricultural and ethnic. It is also a nation where the gulf between the prosperous and the poor is increasing. According to UNDP's 2010 report poverty has fallen by 5 percentage points in the last five years but very poor marginalised communities are not being mainstreamed. This disparity is seen most clearly when looking at the improvement in child and maternal health as Nepal moves towards achieving its Millennium Development Goals. The UNDP report challenges the Government of Nepal to reach beyond the façade created by 'average figures.'

It is in the mountains that access to care continues to depend on a health facility having trained staff, especially skilled birth attendants as 73% of babies are born at home. The United Mission to Nepal (UMN) and the Nick Simons Institute work alongside the government to enhance the skills of rural health workers. The steep valleys are not easy to cross, paths are washed away each year by landslides.

**So far this year OA
has contributed almost
£22,000 to development
work in Nepal**

plane and was safely delivered. The air fare came out of a special hospital fund which had been established due to advocacy by local communities at district and regional level.

In cities it is the hidden communities of migrant workers or internally displaced people who are especially vulnerable. The Lalitpur City Council's maternal and child health care programme which began as a UMN project (YUHP) has expanded service provision to include female health and diabetes screening facilities. A senior member of the team has been invited to contribute to the development of a national urban

health strategic plan. Operation Agri made significant grants to YUHP and the rehabilitated wells continue to supply water for the community.

Minu was living in one room with her husband and two children. They shared a tap and toilet with fifteen other families. The only problem was the tap often ran dry, so Minu made sure her water pot was out in the line before dawn so she could have at least one pot of water for the day. She had come from the hills and did not understand the language of her neighbours. When her daughter was unwell it was the landlady who took her to the city council clinic and paid the two rupee fee (10p). She introduced her to the staff, one of whom was from her own area. Immediately she felt secure knowing she would not be cheated.

The years of Maoist insurgency have resulted in significant migrations of people from the hill areas to the plains where, in the west of the country, International Nepal Fellowship continues to work with internally displaced communities on health issues as well as community mobilisation and sustainable development. Here too Operation Agri has an ongoing commitment to support this programme.



Crossing a river in remote Nepal

Malati walked two days to get to the district hospital when labour began. Her husband thought he was doing the best for his wife. They were devastated to be told she needed a caesarean section and there was no doctor qualified to perform this operation. She needed to be flown to a neighbouring district and the weather was bad. Eventually the weather cleared, she caught the



Filling the water pots

Gifts **presents** *with a* **purpose!**



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Harvest of Hope **RESOURCE PACK**

Operation Agri's 2011 Jubilee resources look back at the past 50 years, and also feature projects bringing a harvest of hope today: honey in Brazil, coffee in Thailand, and training farmers in Uganda.

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Operation Agri BMM a Baptist development organisation, supporting church-linked rural and urban development projects in 3 continents.



DEVELOPMENT IN CHRIST'S NAME 1961-2011

Registered charity no 1069349

*This year's Christmas card
makes you think twice about
the real meaning of Christmas*

Her work was displayed at the Reg Vardy Gallery, Ashburne House, Sunderland as part of the Undergraduate Degree Show, and at an art exhibition and coffee morning at Blackhill Baptist Church, Consett, where a total of £1,257.61 was raised for Operation Agri.



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Jubilee Service, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

11th June 2011

A need. A vision. A response.

On Saturday 11th June friends and supporters of Operation Agri gathered to give thanks for the first 50 years work of Operation Agri.

Celebrating The Past

Joyce Stockley shared memories of her and husband David's work as pioneer agricultural missionaries in former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). It was David who first requested the Baptist Missionary Society to send cold weather seeds, then chicks, and memorably goats, three of which arrived at Chittagong by sea in the care of the ship's butcher.

At that time the Baptist Men's Movement were looking for life-changing development projects to support, and were inspired by this request to form Operation Agri.

The Challenges of the Present

Examples of today's 33 projects were featured, firstly by the Thailand BMS Action Team who helped install a pipeline from a freshwater spring and construct a water tank for a remote Karen village. Daughter of Mike and Daveen Wilson, Debbie, then spoke of the continuing work in Trapia, Brazil, where Operation Agri supports a bee-keeping project used to inspire locals to start up their own.

Vision for the Future

Andy Matheson, International Director of Oasis, spoke of how our capacity to contribute to our own communities is 'written in our DNA,' benefiting others feels more fulfilling than helping ourselves. He encouraged us all to not tire of seeking new openings, finishing with an

A jubilee display representing aspects of OA's activities around the world



anecdote of a 100 year old 'Auntie' who continues to want to learn. With this inspiration, a new Operation Agri / Oasis partnership initiative for leadership training in our partners' communities was launched.

An excellent sermon was preached by Rev Paul Beasley Murray and Rev David Kerrigan led in prayer for the work of OA. (The sermon and other contributions at the Jubilee service can be heard by going to Operation Agri's web site www.operationagri.org.uk within the section "online videos" – see left hand margin). Exhibitions of artefacts from the past as well as photographs of present projects were enjoyed by all who attended.



Russell Ashley-Smith (OA's chairman) with Andy Matheson (Oasis) and David Kerrigan (BMS)

Presentations

The success of Operation Agri has been built on years of voluntary service by many Trustees. During the service presentations were made to some who have made notable contributions:

Michael Putnam was the founder secretary of OA in 1961. Earlier this year he retired after many years as treasurer but he continues as a Trustee and as an OA-nominee on the BMS Development Committee.

Sue Headlam's first contacts with OA were when the charity supported her community health programme and income generation project at Chandraghona Christian hospital, Bangladesh. When Sue retired as a BMS worker and returned to UK, she became a Trustee of OA and assisted with liaison with overseas projects.



Presentations were made to (from left to right) Ilid and Michael Putnam, Joyce Stockley, Glyn and Gill Jones, and Sue Headlam

Glyn and Gill Jones were similarly BMS workers when OA supported their project in Albania. Back in UK they became BMS Trustees and Glyn, as editor, introduced the full colour magazine. Gill was OA's projects officer and created the charity's highly successful 'Presents with a Purpose.'

Sue, Glyn and Gill have all recently retired as Trustees but are continuing to help OA in various ways. We thank God for all whom he has and is calling to make a contribution to his kingdom on earth through Operation Agri.

Training leaders – why and how

By Andy Matheson

Andy spent 18 years in India and was involved in pioneering Oasis work in Mumbai before taking up his present role as their International Director. He also chairs the board of 'Stop The Traffik.'

Take a group of bright, visionary, passionate and gifted people and set them a task and what is the result? Success? Well it might be. But, on the other hand, it might not. In fact, the answer to that question is going to depend on one ingredient – leadership.

Take a loving community of individuals who desire to support and care for each other and in their midst put a pastor who cares for the flock and turns out some great sermons week by week and what do you get? A vibrant church? Well, it might be, but in many situations it is not. The reason? Leadership.

We would not dream of appointing a pastor if they could not preach or a doctor if they could not diagnose or a teacher if they could not teach but that all changes when it comes to leadership. The reason, of course, is that leadership is seldom the reason anyone is appointed to any post – it is almost always an add-on to whatever they are doing. So, a pastor learns to counsel and preach but ends up leading. A doctor knows how to conduct an operation but then one day finds themselves looking after a group of nurses and junior doctors. A teacher teaches but then is asked to run a department. And it can all happen so quickly! When I was 28 I was running a high school in a culture foreign to my own. No leadership training; little experience; making lots of mistakes; learning as I went along. Many don't survive. Some give up because when you are responsible for others you always take some flak. Some leaders make it by the skin of their teeth.

In our world of development the same applies. Anyone involved in a disadvantaged community working for transformation needs to understand leadership to be effective. Leadership is about influence and influence is at the heart of all that we do. If you put the most technically proficient person in the role of community facilitator, if they do not understand the dynamics of influence it won't work. So, we need to give people the tools of leadership. Tools that will enable them to inspire, organize and equip those they work amongst to take responsibility for their community. We need to help those involved in development to understand the importance of morale among those they serve; to understand how to manage their own emotions so that their impact on others is for good and not for harm. Basic leadership lessons can be



Developing small group work



Learning the value of encouragement in leadership

learnt so that young leaders have a chance to survive the cauldron of leadership where decisions sometimes have to be taken fast and those who lead need to know where they are going.

Over the past six years we in Oasis have invested heavily in leadership training and can see an incredible difference in both staff competence and confidence. We are now working with Operation Agri to develop a training package specifically for those working in the field of development. Our hope is that it will assist both our staff and others to increase their influence for good under God's guidance.

Take a group of bright, visionary, passionate and gifted people with a leader who has had some good leadership training and set them a task. What is the result? There is now, at least, a much better possibility of a successful outcome!



Young people learning multicultural leadership skills (right)

Photos: Oasis International

Giving due credit

By Gill Ashley-Smith

*Gill Ashley-Smith writes about
Farms Lanka's successful
micro credit scheme to help
poor families in Sri Lanka*

Micro credit schemes have been in the news recently, as Professor Yunus, founder of the famous Grameen Bank in Bangladesh has been forced to resign. His vision of tiny loans to the poor, often women, at lower interest rates than those from "loan sharks," has helped many families to create jobs, and the idea has spread to many countries. But micro finance has its critics, pointing out that loans to women can be commandeered by husbands, or used to buy consumer goods rather than to generate income, with some people taking new loans to pay off old ones. Also some financial institutions are getting in on the act for profit and demanding higher interest than people can afford.

In Sri Lanka, recent press reports have criticised micro credit lenders as not being effective or viable, and this has brought adverse attitudes and challenges for Operation Agri's partner Farms Lanka, which has been running its own successful scheme for some years. Micro finance institutions usually select the best people to invest in, but Farms Lanka seeks out the most needy, who may be suffering from physical or mental difficulties. So it is not just a matter of giving a loan – but also training and support.

The Farms Lanka Area Co-ordinators contact church pastors or community leaders to ask about the people most in need of help. Before receiving a loan, a detailed assessment is made of their family situation and need, any financial commitments, and what skills and resources they have which could be made more productive with the help of a loan. These may be skills with growing produce, raising livestock, handicrafts, sewing, cooking, fishing or many other possibilities. They are then also given training on running a small business.

Mrs Peiris, a poor lady with a large family, has a mentally ill son. Her church asked Farms Lanka to help her. Clarence Mendis saw she had limited capacity for a job on top of her family responsibilities. But carpentry shops nearby discard wood cuttings, so she has been helped to start a business selling firewood for cooking, and now earns a small income.



Beligodapithya Baptist Church in rural Sri Lanka

Helping people to realise it is not a gift, but a loan to be repaid, is not always easy, but Farms Lanka is keen to teach them to budget so they can repay, even if some need more time. The money can then be recycled for other loans. Those who use a small loan responsibly can apply for a larger loan to develop their work further. However some suffer from various problems, sickness, or disasters like floods, resulting in a 65% rather than 100% repayment. So the loan fund needs regular topping up, as well as expanding to more places, which is where Operation Agri's support is needed.

Farms Lanka specifically encourages those who successfully make a go of their home business to also help others – through tithing to support their church, or contributions to their community. Some also help neighbours to develop their own small businesses, and recommend them to Farms Lanka for support.

Farms Lanka has worked with members of the Beligodapithya Baptist Church for many years, to develop their crop production, animal husbandry and small shops in this rural area. Clarence was invited to a ceremony to open their new Community Centre in memory of BMS missionary Rev Charles Carter, who began the work here 150 years ago, and which is still going strong!



*Clarence Mendis opening the church's
new Community Centre*

Photos: Farms Lanka

**The sum of
£15,000 has been
made available to
support the work
of Farms Lanka
this year**

News in Brief

Visiting villages in Tanzania

Within OA we recognise the importance of leadership, supervision and monitoring of the work we help to support. With this in mind we, as part of our involvement in the training of poor farmers in the Karagwe district west of Lake Victoria in Tanzania, gladly agreed to fund the purchase of a suitable motorcycle. This was to enable staff to visit the scattered farmsteads and provide advice and assistance in sustainable agricultural activities. A Yamaha DT 125 was ordered and by January this year it had arrived in Dar-es-Salaam. Problems with its release through customs ensued and efforts by Rev Heavenlight Luoga, the project manager, failed to obtain the necessary clearances. It finally reached the project in mid July where its arrival has been eagerly awaited and visits to villages are now underway.

Photo: FPI, Tanzania



Newly arrived in Tanzania, this motorbike enables project staff to supervise and encourage farming projects over a wide area

Changing attitudes in Nepal

When a project comes to the end of its allotted period it is a good opportunity to look back and see what has been achieved. Our partners in Nepal (MCDS) go further than this and hold a closing ceremony, inviting the beneficiaries and local dignitaries along. On two recent occasions some encouraging comments have emerged at these celebrations. The CHEST project based at Machhapuchhre recently completed its task of constructing drinking water outlets, toilets and

providing training in kitchen garden cultivation. When work began the communities were seriously opposed to their presence and hesitated to offer them even water whilst they worked. At the ceremony many leaders openly declared to the gathered people that they were sorry for causing the CHEST team so many problems at the start. Their attitude to the presence of Christians was totally changed.

A similar change of attitude was experienced by the CHEP team at Triveni in the east of Nepal. Around 40 people from the community turned up at the field office and apologised for their earlier negative attitude to the project saying: "All the services and works provided by this institution are quite praiseworthy. The functions... have raised our economic condition and life standard. We worship God to have his blessing for further success of this project." The CHEST and CHEP teams - and we in the UK - echo their praise. "May the name of the Lord be glorified!"

Building self-confidence in Uganda

Earlier this year our Oasis Beersheba partner in Uganda held its 3rd holiday programme. Over 200 children from Musoto came for four afternoons of Bible stories, craft, games and fun. Alongside the holiday programme 40 children, who had been identified by their schools as likely to drop out, spent the mornings learning catch-up English and Maths. For some of them it was the first time they had ever been taught to write their names and the project leaders are hopeful that as the teachers continue to work with them back in school we will see their grades and self confidence improving.

Harvesting Honey in Brazil

OA is privileged to be involved in the beekeeping project overseen by BMS workers Mike and Daveen Wilson. Daveen reports, "In July the four who've been beekeeping the longest - Edilson, Claudio, Dorivan and Pedrinho - decided to harvest their honey all together. I started taking them to collect the frames in their apiaries at 3pm on Thursday. They then worked through the night de-capping the combs and extracting the honey. Mike transported the frames back to the apiaries, finishing up about 3pm on the Friday. Paul Wilson and his cousin Daniel helped out in the morning, but there were four extremely tired beekeepers by the end. The grand total for the day was 565 litres. Please pray for safety from robbery."

Prayer Points

Please use this page in conjunction with other information in the magazine

Thailand

- Praise God for the faithful work of Nohan, the coffee project manager, and his brother Nasaray (project co-ordinator at Baw Kaew). These men are used by God to help and inspire many coffee growers in NW Thailand. Pray for the success of plans to process coffee at the Baw Kaew centre.
- Praise God that a good price is being paid for the green coffee beans. This helps the economy of every family involved in growing coffee.
- Pray for the new venture of planting coffee seedlings around homes in the villages close to Baw Kaew. Hopefully the seedlings will yield a crop in 3-4 years.

Bangladesh

- We are asked by our Bangladesh partners to pray for political stability, peace, good governance and economic growth for their country.
- Pray particularly for Nripen Baidya, the leader of Duaripara project (see p. 3) as he completes the long-term plans for the next stage of the project and as he, with other leaders, seeks God's guidance about replicating the work in another Dhaka slum.
- A jewellery business has been launched in Duaripara to create employment opportunities both for the mothers and older sisters of the girls who are part of the project and also for survivors of human trafficking. Our prayers are requested for wisdom as the Business Team considers product development and market promotion for this new venture.
- Pray too for the leaders of Oasis in Bangladesh in their struggle to get NGO registration. Mr Mahanda Bairagee has recently been appointed as Director of SHED Board. Pray that he will be guided by our Lord as he uses his gifts to help lift needy people out of poverty and deprivation.

Zimbabwe

- There is an election scheduled for later this year. Already pressure with veiled threats is being applied to voters by activists for the Zanu PF party to declare their loyalty and support. Pray that the elections when they arrive will be fair and democratic, free from violence and that the outcome will reflect the democratic free will voting of the population.
- Please pray for the projects being established as part of the Green Island Vision on the Morning Star Ranch and for Kevin and Gill Jones and their recently arrived BMS colleagues Brad and Ruth Biddulph as they support this work.

Uganda

- Parts of the north and east of this country have been identified as being on the fringe of the East Africa famine area. Pray that these people can be given the help that they need.

- Pray that the sustainable agricultural training being offered to various projects by Rev Paul Kyalimpa will enable subsistence farmers to improve their food production in the area around Gulu in the North, Nakaseke near to Kampala, and Karagwe in western Tanzania. Pray for Dave Caswell who has recently returned to Uganda following further training and has resumed his work with the Beersheba project, helping girls at risk and their carers in Mbale. Continue to pray for all the on-going activities at Beersheba including the teaching of the Esteem course, Pastors meetings, Mentoring, and Life skills education.
- Pray for Pastor Dennis Ssettaala the director of SDKF, as he oversees two projects in a slum area of Kampala to provide vocational training to young people, and another project up country at Nakaseke helping subsistence farmers and generating income to support needy children with their school fees and educational materials.

Tanzania

- Pray for Rev Heavenlight Luoga as he manages the Farming Partnership Initiatives project at Karagwe and for Rev Apolinary Mshembezi who has been appointed as the field worker for this project.

India

- Pray for the leaders of the work at WUAC, Diptipur as they seek to reach out to needy people in the many villages of that region. We anticipate that our ongoing support of the work there will be through short term projects with direct application to the improvement of food production, local employment and training activities. Pray for guidance as these ideas are put together and considered.

Afghanistan

- Remember those who are working within RESAP to bring employment and improved life-styles for men and women in Afghanistan. They live and work in difficult circumstances relating to security and culture. Pray that their dedicated service may bring good and encouraging results.

Sri Lanka

- The work at Farms Lanka needs our prayer support as they continue to improve the livelihood of needy people through income generating projects and through children's education. Pray for Clarence Mendis and his co-workers as they take these and other development activities forward.
- The activities of the projects supported through Leads are many and touch the lives of a wide range of people in the rural communities – farmers, gardeners, bee-keepers, tailors, school children – to name a few. Pray that in every contact made and every need met the love of God may be evident.

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This year's appeal materials, 'Harvest of Hope,' explore the future of OA's work in the light of the last 50 years, with video from Thailand, Uganda and Brazil. These resources are suitable for use in church, youth club, school – anywhere your imagination can take you. There is an order form inside this issue, or go to www.operationagri.org.uk to order online.

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